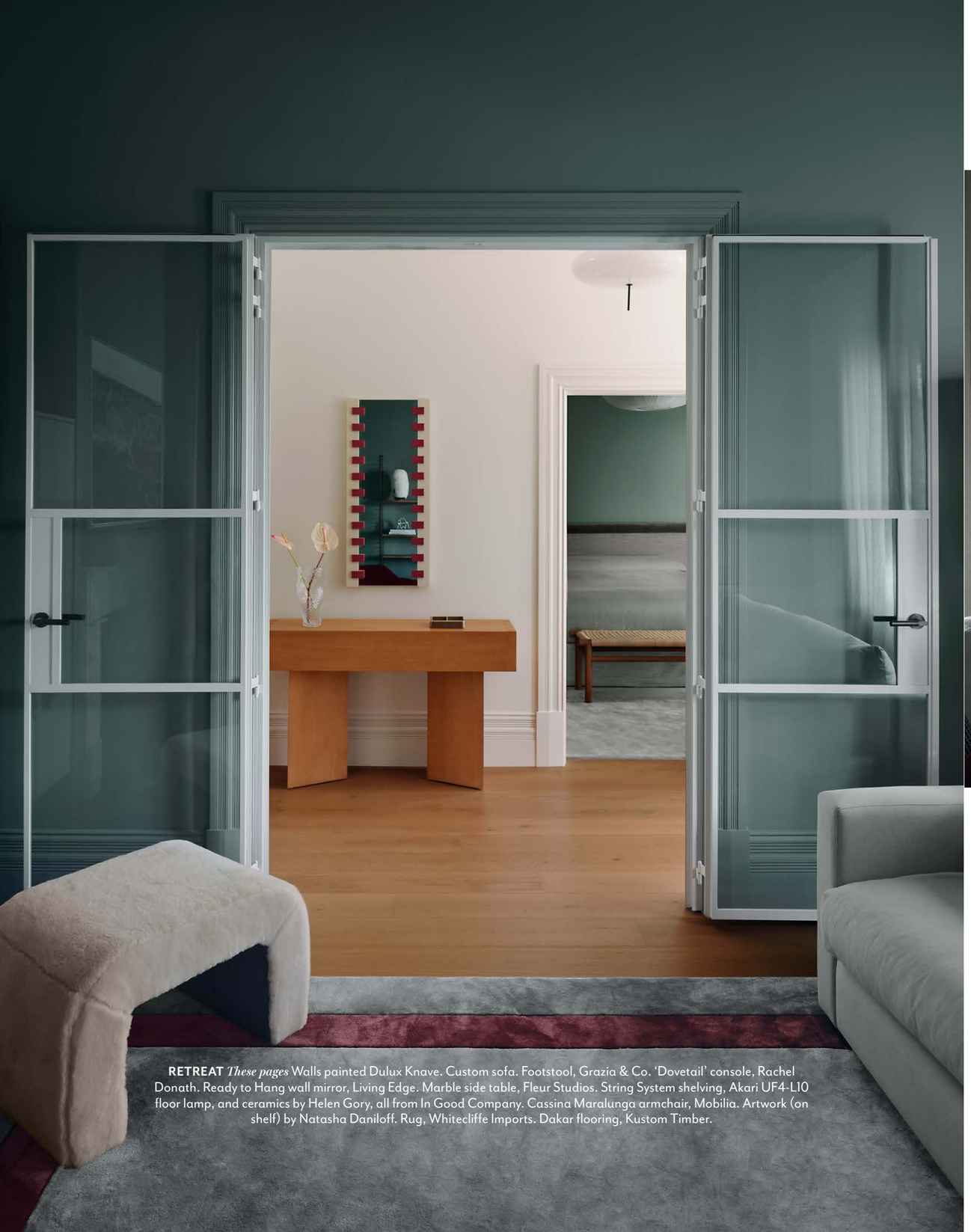
OUT *of* BOUNDS

An inspired refurbishment of a heritage home in inner Melbourne coaxed the owners outside their comfort zone – with striking results.

STORY *Chris Pearson* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Rhiannon Taylor*

ENTRY Wall painted Dulux Natural White. 'Dovetail' oak console, Rachel Donath. Ready to Hang wall mirror, Living Edge. Astep pendant, Mobilia. 'Bone' chair by Loic Bard, Radnor. **FACADE** *Opposite* Landscaping by Bethany Williamson Landscape Architecture. Conical outdoor light, Studio Henry Wilson. Dakar flooring, Kustom Timber.



RETREAT *These pages* Walls painted Dulux Knave. Custom sofa. Footstool, Grazia & Co. 'Dovetail' console, Rachel Donath. Ready to Hang wall mirror, Living Edge. Marble side table, Fleur Studios. String System shelving, Akari UF4-L10 floor lamp, and ceramics by Helen Gory, all from In Good Company. Cassina Maralunga armchair, Mobilia. Artwork (on shelf) by Natasha Daniloff. Rug, Whitecliffe Imports. Dakar flooring, Kustom Timber.

"Like all good renovations, once we started, we realised it could be so much more."

HOMEOWNER

When the owners renovated this light-filled Victorian bungalow in inner Melbourne, they pushed the boundaries in more ways than one. With encouragement from their interior designer, Sarah Reid of Sarah Reid & Others (SR&O), they boldly went places they had never imagined and they haven't looked back.

"We were looking for a newly renovated heritage property. We loved the character and charm of a Victorian bungalow with the convenience and comforts of a modern renovation," says the owner. But the couple struggled to find that combination and settled on this promising property in 2023.

Although the home had been renovated 30 years earlier and had lots of natural light, it looked dated and had little insulation. Rather than deterring the couple, its shortcomings presented an opportunity to tailor the house to their needs. "We could see potential," says the owner. "It had character and was in a great location, but it was ready for renovation."

The owners found Sarah online and engaged her for the interiors. Elements of Home handled the external architecture.

"Sarah has an amazing design eye. She is particular about every detail, but is also endlessly practical," says the owner. On that latter score, the couple needed one more bedroom and a room that could function as a second living room, together with an update of the kitchen, the ensuite and the bathroom. "But, like all good renovations, once we started, we realised it could be so much more," adds the owner.

Among possible layouts, Sarah proposed a double storey, which the couple had not considered. ▶

THE PALETTE

Porter's Paints Sea Glass (main bedroom)

Marcella marble (bar)

"When we saw its potential, we knew that was the path to go down. It added the extra bedroom we were after, plus we could turn one of the downstairs bedrooms into a second living room by moving that bedroom upstairs."

For the overall look, they wanted it to feel "homely and relaxed, and not too precious. We wanted to respect the character in the front, particularly the plasterwork and decorative fireplaces." But they also wanted the designer to guide them outside their comfort zone.

"We asked Sarah to push us with the colours and other choices, knowing that, if left to our own devices we'd be inclined to make beige, safe decisions," says the owner. "She encouraged us to be bolder, which we were grateful for."

First up, in the original section, Sarah retained and restored, where necessary, the cornices, corbels, skirtings and ceiling roses, while adding new flooring, insulation and windows, including new stained glass around the front door. She replaced a bedroom at the front with the second sitting room, connected to the hallway with steel-famed double glass doors, while shifting walls to create a generous main bedroom suite and a pantry. Meanwhile, she relocated an enlarged bathroom and a laundry into the new two-storey addition, which also includes an expansive open-plan, connected seamlessly to a barbecue area through sliding doors. Upstairs are two bedrooms and another bathroom.

"I was keen to reference the front's generous ceiling heights and room proportions in the new section," says Sarah. "We continued the heights and took cues from the heritage detailing, scale and proportion, for example in the skirting and door heights." And as the original boards needed to be replaced, oak flooring flows from front to back. But there's also a clear delineation between old and new, with steel doors forming a threshold between the two. "This gave us a point to terminate the older cornice and skirting details, and pivot into the more contemporary areas." ▶

BAR & DINING *This page* Studio Bastiras dining table, Massproductions dining chair and Gubi dining chairs, all In Good Company. Bar in Marcella marble, CDK Stone. Pendant, Volker Haug. Curtains, Shades. 'Diiva' bar stools, Grazia & Co. Island in Lorde White dolomite, CDK Stone. Dakar flooring, Kustom Timber. *Opposite* **KITCHEN/LIVING** 'Dovetail' coffee table, Rachel Donath. Side table, Living Edge. Sofa, Jardan. Bar stools, Grazia & Co. Dining table and chair, both In Good Company. Island in Lorde White Dolomite, CDK Stone. Icon+ tapware in Iron Bronze, Astra Walker. Rug, Whitecliffe Imports. **POOL** A clever 'drop-off' – deep enough to meet safety requirements – takes the place of a pool fence.

“The main bedroom and ensuite feel opulent and make us feel like we live in a hotel.”

HOMEOWNER

MAIN BEDROOM Walls painted Porter’s Paints Sea Glass. ‘Marcel’ bedhead, Heatherly Design. ‘Fin’ bedside table, Ellison Studios. Wall light, Volker Haug. Muuto ‘Strand’ pendant, In Good Company. ‘Anchor Ladder’ bench seat, GlobeWest. Curtains, Shades. **HALLWAY** *Opposite, left* Fireplace in Carrara marble, Signorino. Curtains from Shades. Carpet, Whitecliffe Imports. **MAIN ENSUITE** *Right* Inax wall tiles, Gazaro marble benchtop and Artegres floor tiles, all Artedomus. Splashback in Vanilla Ice marble, Signorino. Icon+ tapware in Iron Bronze and ‘Pura’ basins, all Astra Walker. ‘Torii’ sconce, South Drawn.

And clever use of colour formed a key part of the demarcation, while being a brave departure for the owners.

“I used colour through the heritage areas for depth and drama, then sporadically through the new spaces, where it opens to a lighter, softer palette,” says Sarah. “Colour changes the dynamic and feel, while also creating the unexpected – the bar unit opens to reveal beautiful burgundy joinery and the main bedroom has been colour drenched, as has the front sitting room, with custom furniture and joinery to match.” For those bold hues, she took her cues from the leadlights and the garden.

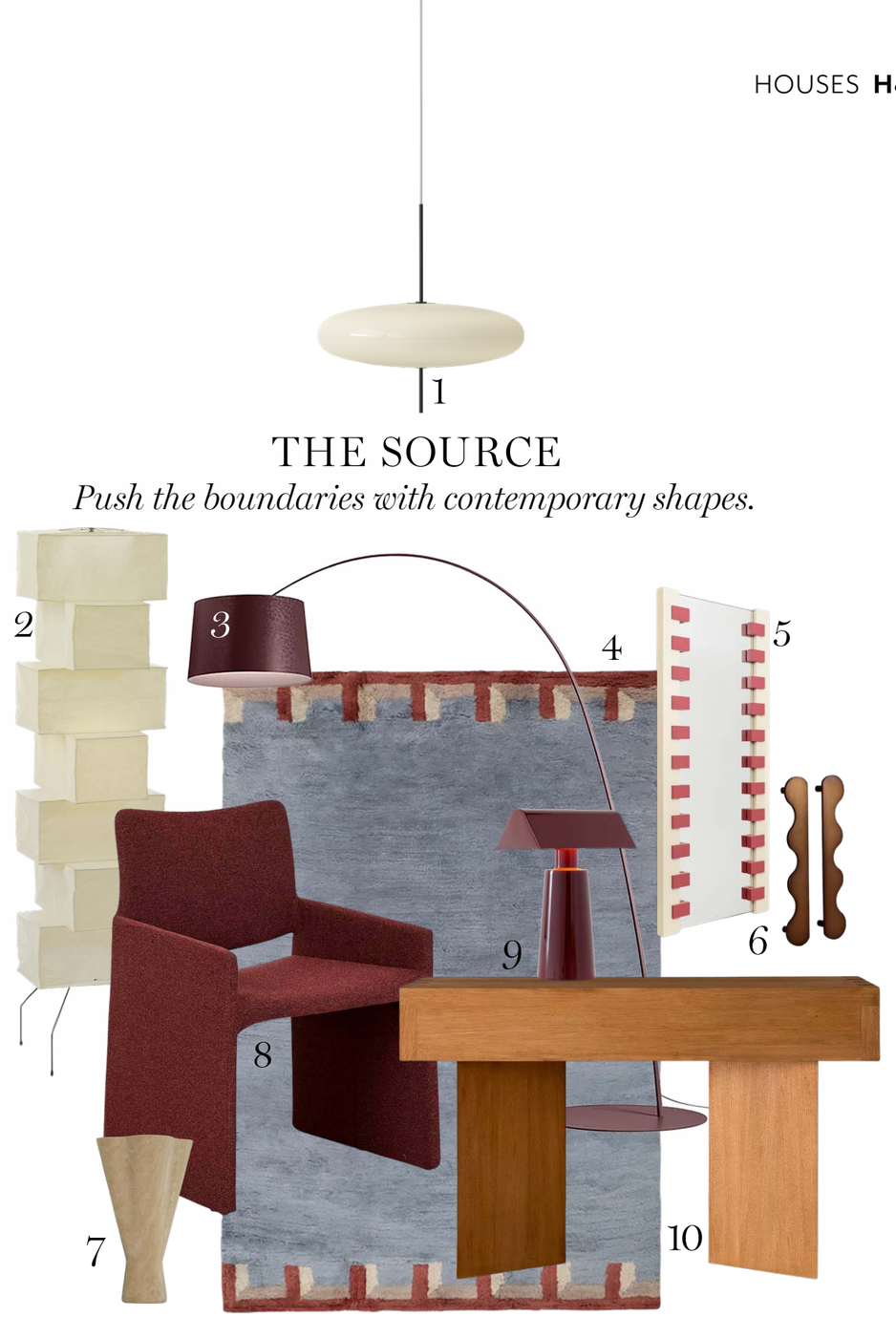
“We cannot believe we get to live here,” says the owner. “It looks beautiful and feels special, but it’s also so relaxing. The main bedroom and ensuite feel opulent and make us feel like we live in a hotel. The second living space’s strong colour and soft, comfortable furnishings make for a calm and relaxing room, while the drama of the maroon bar behind the sliding doors is a highlight when we have guests. It gets well used! It’s all perfect, beyond anything we could have ever imagined.” ▶

SR&O: *sr-and-o.com.au.* ***Elements of Home:*** *elementsofhome.com.au.* ***BWLA:*** *bethanywilliamson.com.au.*

OUTDOOR DINING Fisher & Paykel DCS Grill barbecue, Winnings. Muuto 'Linear' outdoor table and chairs, In Good Company. Barbecue benchtop in Maximum Argento porcelain, Artedomus. Villa Stone barbecue mosaic, Signorino. Pamir porcelain paving, Perini Tiles.

THIS IS THE LIFE

The owners enjoy every part of the house, either for quiet time or entertaining. "The gorgeous marble kitchen island is many times the size of our old kitchen and we love to cook, so that gets a lot of use," says the owner. "The pool and fireplace are well used, depending on the season, but look fantastic year round. And the front living room has a wonderful calming effect."



THE SOURCE

Push the boundaries with contemporary shapes.

1 Astep 'Model 2065' **pendant,** $2239, Finnish Design Shop. **2** Akari **floor lamp**, $4275, Living Edge. **3** 'Twiggy' **floor lamp** in Burgundy, $3280, Space. **4** 'Stillwater' washable **rug** in Silver Blue (300x200cm), $1960, Double Studio. **5** 'Zip' **mirror**, $1412, Ready to Hang. **6** 'Kara' **pull** in Bronze, $64, Lo&Co. **7** 'Clover' tall **sculpture**, $719, CoTheory. **8** 'Jude' **dining chair** in Port, $970, GlobeWest. **9** 'Caret' **table lamp**, $410, Luumo Design. **10** 'Dovetail' **console**, $1680, Rachel Donath. **H&G**

Produced by Andrea Healy and Amanda McCourt.